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ABSTRACT

Three examples of successful integration efforts in England are presented. Springfield Junior School in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, originally comprised three separate institutions--an ordinary junior school, a special unit for children with severe learning difficulties, and a special unit for children with moderate learning difficulties. The three units began to merge in 1981, with the aim of integrating as fully as possible children with varying degrees of disability and difficulty in a way that all children benefit. The Leeds Education Authority in Leeds, West Yorkshire, established a Hearing Impaired Service to achieve total integration of deaf pupils from age 9 to post 16 and to implement a bilingual policy (sign language and English). At Kingsway College in Camden, London, integration has been evolving for 20 years to include students (ages 16 and over) with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The three case examples describe development of special services, teaching methods, attitudinal changes, social integration, and cost effectiveness. (JDD)

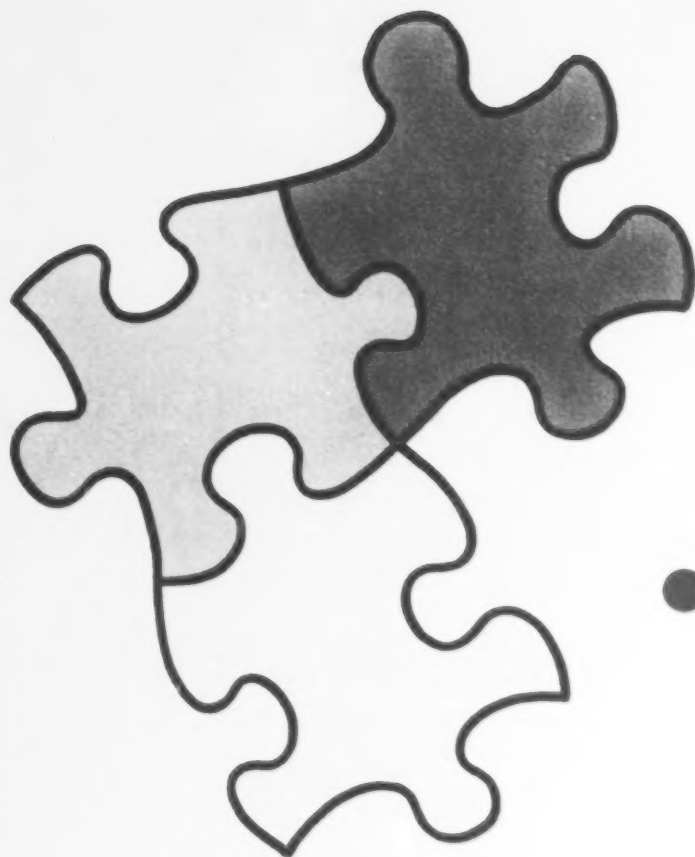
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INTEGRATION WORKING

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● Springfield Junior
School, Derbyshire

● Leeds – integration
of deaf pupils and
students

● Kingsway FE College,
Camden, London

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Written by
Carolyn O'Grady
for

THE CENTRE FOR STUDIES ON
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INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION

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- Leeds – integration of deaf pupils and students
- Kingsway FE College, Camden, London

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Integration Working

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Springfield Junior School

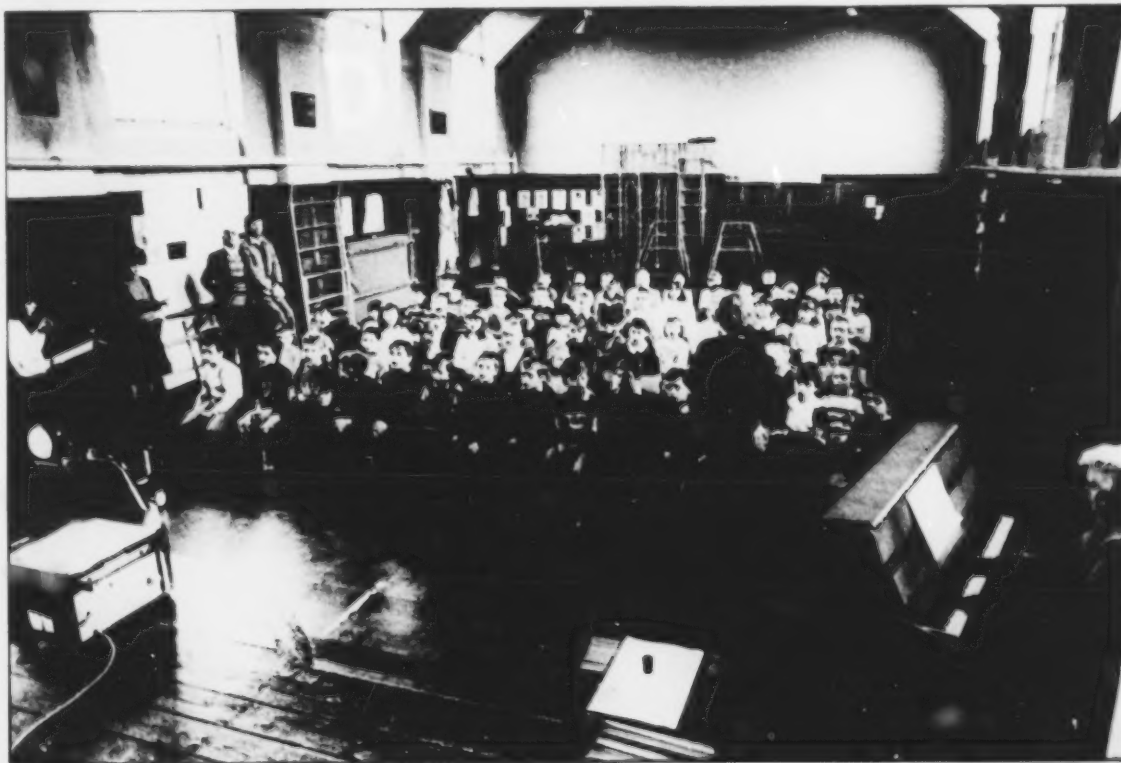
Where: Swadlincote, Derbyshire.

Beginnings: Three separate institutions on the Springfield site — a mainstream junior school and two special units, one for children with severe learning difficulties and one for children with moderate learning difficulties — began to merge in 1981.

Numbers: 50 children with a wide range of disabilities integrated in a total school population of 230.

Ages: From seven to 11 in the mainstream school and starting at two years in the Early Learning Group.

Aim: To integrate as fully as possible children with varying degrees of disability and difficulty from South Derbyshire into the school in a way that all children benefit.





Springfield School has an unusual history. Before the school became integrated there were three separate institutions on the same site: an ordinary junior school catering for children living in the neighbourhood and two special units for children from all over South Derbyshire — one for pupils then labelled "educationally subnormal, moderate" and the other for children categorised at the time as "educationally subnormal, severe".

Each institution ran independently, although they shared some outdoor activities. From as early as the late 1960s when Derbyshire County Council decided to build the first special unit next door to the ordinary junior school, the separate provision on the same site was a stark reminder to staff of the inequalities caused by segregation.

Then in 1981 the junior school headship became vacant and the education authority asked for an applicant who would run the schools as one entity. By now Derbyshire was actively pursuing a policy of integration and saw the possibilities of Springfield as a flagship.

Three groups

Ian Mitchell, the successful applicant, began his task with a careful examination of the needs of the three groups of children.

"What I saw was that the kids in the two special needs units were getting remediation but would benefit from a more experiential, practical curriculum and the skills of the teachers in the mainstream school, while a lot of mainstream children with learning difficulties were getting a wider curriculum but no help with their learning difficulties.

"All sorts of expertise existed in the school for helping children with a variety of special needs, but this expertise was being concentrated on a small group in the special needs units."

Ian Mitchell also noticed that children in the special needs units, given the opportunity, "kept displaying talents we didn't know they had".

Untapped potential

Dean showed his untapped potential following a school camping expedition to North Derbyshire. After the trip the children were given different tasks. The mainstream children were asked to make maps and plans. Dean's assigned task was drawing but what he actually did was the work he noticed the junior children doing.

"We found that, though he couldn't read, he could make maps and plans every bit as good as the mainstream kids", says Ian Mitchell.

From experiences like this Ian Mitchell concluded that "the way pupils were labelled not only exposed them to a totally different curriculum but, worse, a different set of adult expectations. I began to believe that these expectations influenced the behaviour and performance of the children".

Between 1983 and 1984 Ian Mitchell began encouraging teachers who wanted to work together with a wider range of children. As a first step a club afternoon was arranged when each teacher took charge of a particular activity, for example weaving and other crafts and sport. Children from all parts of the school chose what they wanted to do and parents were encouraged to join in as well. As Lana Coy, deputy head who is also responsible for the children with severe learning difficulties, says: "It gave the teachers a chance to get to know the kids and then it moved further".

Another initial step was a project about water for seven-to-eight-year-olds from all parts of the school involving team teaching of small, mixed ability groups.

The change-over then continued gradually on a voluntary basis and even today no pressure is put on teachers to have children with disabilities or learning difficulties in their classes if they do not want to. Initially this meant there was a block of children with learning difficulties in one class and, perhaps, none in another. The situation evened out as more and more teachers chose to be involved, with all mainstream classes now being integrated.

The way in which children are integrated continues to be very flexible. In one class five or six children with statements under the 1981 Education Act are taught by the teacher with help from the educational care officer as needed. In another class a child with severe learning difficulties is supported by an assistant much of the time because her needs are greater. The school tries to match each child with a classroom situation and teacher which will suit him or her. Ian Mitchell says that as integration progressed it was found that "wherever we had all ability groups with good resources, enough staff, and well prepared activities, results were very positive both educationally and socially for all children".

Diverse strategies

Diverse teaching strategies to take account of the varied needs of the wider group of children proved to be another vital element. Not only children with disabilities and learning difficulties benefited from this approach — "a lot of kids from the mainstream did too".

The use of variety in teaching strategies was illustrated in a lesson about air pressure. The teacher used plastic syringes to illustrate the principle to the mixed ability group of eight and nine year olds. Two syringes were linked with a piece of plastic tubing and when the plunger of one was pushed in, the plunger of the other came out. Before this demonstration the children made models of Humpty Dumpty from paper and plastic bottles.

The climax of the lesson came when the Humpty Dumpty models were placed on a cardboard wall to be pushed off by a plunger. Each time they fell the class sang Humpty Dumpty. The song was probably the most important moment for Emma, who has learning difficulties. It was a time she could fully share with her class and an opportunity to improve her language abilities. For other pupils the sophisticated demonstration of a scientific principle provided the main lesson. What mattered in this class was not that all children learned the same thing at the same time, but that everybody benefited in their own way.



According to Ian Mitchell such an approach demands a wide variety of resources — "masses and masses of them" — and it can be difficult to both locate and buy them.

Teachers have to think harder about resources than they would in a more traditional school. Springfield tries not to label children by using separate worksheets for children of different abilities and teachers may have to express the same information in different ways on the same sheet. They cannot take for granted children's reading ability and may have to accompany words with diagrams and drawings.

Another advantage of integration is that children socialise with each other more naturally. "The different special needs groups used to play together in one part of the playground and the mainstream children would refer to them as 'the handicaps'", says Ian Mitchell. "Now you don't hear that word, the labels have disappeared and the children play together".

Mainstream children appear helpful and do not seem frustrated or annoyed by the different abilities of some of the children and their occasional bizarre behaviour. One pupil remarked "You learn that children aren't capable of doing all the things that we do but they can really achieve things if they try".





The behaviour of the children from the special needs units was also seen to improve when they were integrated. There are still instances of bizarre behaviour but they are few. On a recent television programme a mother told of progress achieved by her daughter since being at Springfield. "She has caught up with her own age group. It's helped her mature", said the mother. "It's not just education we're interested in, it's the social development and the emotional as well. Before she was wrapped up in cotton wool, she didn't develop socially... now she has got somebody to keep up with".

Cost effective

When Springfield put its case to parents and the County Council for integration to be permanent, it argued not only on grounds of equal opportunities and educational and social benefits for all children, but also in terms of cost effectiveness.

The staff explained that the 180 children who came to the school because it was their local primary school were entitled to a head and six teachers. On the other hand the additional 50



special needs children would have had a head and seven teachers if they had been educated in a separate special school. Because Springfield needed only one head it could make large savings on administrative costs which could be used to finance educational care officers for each class.

The effect of sharing 230 children among 14 teachers assisted by 14 educational care officers was to reduce class sizes substantially — to between 14 and 18 children in each. "We suggested to the LEA that the cost of running one school was less than running three schools and we were able to persuade them to support the children in additional ways", says Ian Mitchell.

Another provision agreed for Springfield was an "early learning group" which serves an important function for both the school and South Derbyshire. It is here that children with complex medical and learning difficulties stay and where children are assessed for statements and recommendations about placements.

The unit is a colourful, lively place in the centre of the school and has many visitors. One room is a "Snoezelen" multi-sensory room which stimulates children by sound, a variety of patterns and pictures and things to touch. The children go out to assembly, and perhaps to lunch and other





all-school activities. Many attend classes in the rest of the school on a part-time basis and will eventually be integrated full time.

The usual age for the group is between two and 11, though some children could remain until they are 19. Staff include two teachers, two nursery nurses and a qualified nurse. Louise, aged 11, who has cerebral palsy and a visual impairment, will probably stay with the group until she is 16. Lee, an eight-year-old who has Down's Syndrome, will transfer to a first year class soon and Jenny, aged five, who has speech difficulties, is spending time at the local infants school to see whether it is the right placement for her.



Local continuity

This part of Derbyshire can provide local continuity of provision for children with disabilities and difficulties; most pupils arrive at Springfield from Elmsleigh Infants School in Swadlincote which is integrated and also has an integrated nursery. At the age of 11 they go on to Pingle Comprehensive School in the town which has a large number of special needs children. As neither of these schools has a qualified nurse, infant-age children and those over 11 who need medical supervision usually attend Springfield School.



These three schools receive the vast majority of special needs children in the area. Only blind and deaf children do not attend, mainly says Ian Mitchell because they have very specific needs. They are taught in other local mainstream schools and there are also special schools for blind and deaf children elsewhere in the county.

Ideally, many staff would like special needs children to go to their local schools because it would enable them to make friends out of school more easily. A fleet of buses, vans and taxis arrives at Springfield in the morning and in the evening to ferry children to and from their homes.

However, bringing them together at Springfield does have administrative and financial advantages. Concentrating provision in one school means that resources can be used efficiently and ensures the school makes adjustments to meet the diverse needs of a large minority. In addition because the school is known to have many special needs children it attracts a lot of charitable donations. These extra funds have gone towards building a swimming pool, furnishing the "Snoezelen" room and supplying a computer to every classroom.

Derbyshire County Council is one of the highest spending authorities on special needs. Councillor Sean Stafford, chair of the education committee, said the county "actively pursued a policy of massive support", especially teaching support for schools practising integration. He hoped that the introduction of local financial management with schools running their own budgets would not undermine progress. He believed governors who were well aware of the wider needs of the community would not deflect money from integration. The LEA would be running training courses for governors on the financial management of integration.

Positive reactions

Springfield parents' reactions to integration have been positive; research before the school was unified strongly suggested parents did not want children to be integrated while research after integration revealed a complete reversal in attitudes. Even now some parents of children in the early learning group are doubtful when it is first suggested their children move into the mainstream, either at Springfield or another school. "Parents see their children coping in the group and are fearful about how they will like it in the main school", says Lana Coy. "But they feel their children have made it when they integrate. It makes the parents more confident as well".

According to Ian Mitchell, parents of the mainstream children soon see they are not being held back and that the school is better resourced, especially in terms of staff. "Moreover, many appreciate that the kids gain in insight, that they have a more caring attitude, and are more understanding".

Occasionally a parent will express reservations about integration and they will be invited to see how it works.

Ian Mitchell says the next step is to look more closely at the school — "how we teach is as important as what we teach", and to try and gather a wider range of resources especially for technology and science. Of the National Curriculum he says: "It will give us a better sense of direction provided it's all as well thought out as the maths and science curriculum has been".

For the teachers and himself he would like more time to reflect and plan. "We need thinking space", he says. □



Leeds integration of deaf pupils

Where: Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Beginnings: Leeds began integrating children with disabilities or difficulties in learning — including deaf children — into mainstream schools before the 1981 Education Act came into force. In 1986 the authority set up a Hearing Impaired Service to radically change both the pattern of provision and how children were supported in ordinary schools.

Numbers: Over 300 deaf children, young people and adults.

Ages: From 0 to 16 plus.

Aim: To achieve total integration of deaf pupils from 0 to post 16 and to implement a bi-lingual policy within a philosophy of teaching deaf pupils and students in the mainstream.





Since the mid 1980s Leeds Education Authority has been undertaking a major re-organisation of its educational provision for deaf children. This has involved the integration of all deaf children and students into the authority's nurseries, schools and colleges and radical changes in teaching methods.

Leeds has a strong political commitment to integration and during the last five years has spent a total of £15 million supporting pupils with statements in mainstream schools. By the beginning of 1990 the additional annual budget for integration had reached £5 million. Of 2,500 children with statements, more than half (1,500), were in mainstream.

The authority's city-wide integration scheme for deaf pupils covers the whole of the deaf community from birth to post 16. The policy involves encouraging staff and pupils within schools and colleges to use sign language and the recruitment of deaf staff.

Even before introduction of the 1981 Education Act, Leeds was increasingly integrating children with disabilities and deaf and hearing impaired children into mainstream schools. They were either being integrated fully into schools or entering two units for the hearing impaired which were attached to a middle and a primary school. By 1986 the city's one special school for deaf children had only 20 pupils.

Miranda Pickersgill, head of the Hearing Impaired Service, says parents wanted more integration for their children, while at the same time, teachers and other professionals were becoming disillusioned with the oralist philosophy which then underpinned teaching of deaf students. This approach emphasised the acquisition of spoken English through amplification of residual hearing and through lipreading.

"What we wanted", says Miranda Pickersgill, "was a philosophy that embraced deaf children from deaf families and ethnic minority families,



● Leeds Town Hall — In five years the authority spent £15 million on integration.



● *Challenging assumptions*

the pre-lingually, profoundly deaf and children with additional difficulties. In other words an equal opportunities philosophy by which the method of communication depended on the needs of the child".

As the Leeds City Council was at this time addressing equal opportunity issues on a general level, this type of approach for teaching deaf pupils and students received a very steadfast political commitment from council members.

Total communication

The first move in 1986 was to establish a new Hearing Impaired Service with two objectives: to replace the oralist philosophy with a policy of "total communication" and to accelerate moves towards integration (see below for description of total communication). As Ms Pickersgill says: "Other authorities have done one or the other but we are probably the only authority which has tried to do it all in one go".

Miranda Pickersgill does not brush over the early difficulties — "there were major teething problems" — and emphasises that without political commitment from council members the change would have been impossible.

Two units for children with partial hearing, a special school for the deaf and a peripatetic school in Leeds, each with their own agenda and own managers, were involved in the re-organisation. "We had to bring all these people under one umbrella", she says, "and we had to challenge the assumptions underlying our work. We took people back to basics because it doesn't matter how skilled people are the results will be less effective if attitudes are wrong".

The Hearing Impaired Service found that, while some children could be individually integrated with peripatetic support, others had to be integrated in a group. These children needed more intensive support from their deaf peers and from trained staff.

What emerged was the concept of a resource school, a mainstream school which, says Miranda Pickersgill, is "both resourced for deaf children and also a resource for deaf children". Each of the nine resource schools has a base from which children integrate into other classrooms and to which they are withdrawn. The difference from schools with special needs units is that the whole resource school is resourced to meet the needs of deaf pupils and complex and often radical adjustments are expected throughout the school.

Initially it was hoped that the city could be divided into four zones with each zone making provision for deaf pupils and students from three to 18, an arrangement which would have allowed children to move with their peers through the schools. However, the plan proved impractical and under present arrangements the resource schools — four primary, two middle and three high — are not geographically placed to provide the continuity which was hoped for.

Provision begins with the under-fives. Each of the primary resource schools has a nursery and two nurseries take deaf children. In addition deaf instructors and pre-school support teachers work very closely with families, either individually or in groups, and offer communication workshops for families. At the other end of the age range a "total communication unit" has responsibility for deaf young people in post-16 education. The work is co-ordinated by Maureen Wood, herself deaf, and a staff of three.



Bi-lingual approach

The way in which the service is staffed to support deaf pupils in resource schools is thought to be unique and only makes sense in terms of the hearing impaired service's educational philosophy. Most people define total communication in terms of using sign with speech, lipreading and use of residual hearing. But the Leeds service sees it more as a system of attitudes and beliefs which spring from the need to develop a system reflecting what deaf people want. The service aims to give children access to both sign language and English, with individual children choosing, according to their needs, which method of communication they will use in particular circumstances.

In the case of Punjabi and other ethnic minority language speakers this bi-lingual approach amounts to tri-lingual education. Most of the Asian deaf children attend a resource school with a large Asian intake and some of these children may speak in Punjabi at home, English at school and sign language with friends.

The service wanted to introduce both English and sign language at the same time but it soon became obvious that for many children the development of effective communication and of initial concepts had to be done through sign language, which in the early stages of education assumed more and more importance.

"We acknowledge that it is very hard for deaf children to learn English or another spoken tongue", says Miranda Pickersgill. "They will do better if they are first given sign language within a bi-lingual context. Sign language is the bottom line".

Once children have learned sign language the task is to find ways of using it to give children access to both English and the rest of the curriculum.

Walking round a Leeds resource school where many staff and pupils use sign language it is hard

to believe that initially teachers had a critical attitude to signing. At West End Primary School, which has 12 deaf children, hearing children and deaf children unselfconsciously sign when they sing in music lessons or assembly. This facility has developed from signing lessons and from the children watching deaf instructors and interpreters signing to deaf children.

At Parklands High School, a girl's comprehensive school with three deaf pupils, all pupils have lessons in sign language and many have reached a high standard of proficiency. As is the case with most languages, years of practice are needed to become a fluent signer.

Generous staffing

The transformation to total communication is the product of a whole school policy backed by generous staffing. The hearing impaired service has 45 staff compared with only about 22 in the former special school, units and peripatetic service. Miranda Pickersgill emphasises that without this increased level of staffing the service would not work.

The bi-lingual approach requires a team teaching approach. People whose skills complement each other have been recruited and the team includes deaf and hearing people who are native or near-native sign language users. Support teachers are present in every resource school, but deaf instructors and interpreters are shared between schools; a deaf instructor might be based in a primary school but go out from there to middle schools and high schools or to the homes of deaf infants.

Gradually the service identified deaf instructors who were particularly good with specific groups and the system was adjusted so they could concentrate their energies most effectively. In schools the deaf staff tend to work more in the resource base while the hearing staff more often work in an integrated setting.

At West End Primary School the 12 deaf children are split into two groups. The early years group is staffed by a teacher, a deaf non-teaching assistant and a nursery nurse. Staff in the primary group include a support teacher, a deaf instructor, who is there most of the time, and a non-teaching assistant who is the daughter of deaf parents and therefore a native sign language user.

The service attaches immense importance to placing deaf adults in schools, not only because they sign expertly and understand the problems of deaf children, but also because they act as language and role models.

In primary schools deaf instructors clarify information in British Sign Language (BSL), teach sign language to deaf and hearing children and act as role models and confidants. In high schools their role is mainly pastoral, providing pupils with someone to talk to unreservedly about their difficulties. They also teach sign language to hearing pupils. At Parklands High School, for example, sign language is a compulsory subject for hearing pupils for three-quarters of an hour a week for ten weeks.

In a school like West End Primary School, where there is a large proportion of deaf children, they and other children with disabilities have an enormous impact on the school and the nature of teaching changes a great deal. Miranda Pickersgill recognises there are difficulties: "We have infringed on the prerogative of teachers by bringing people into the classroom who are not teachers".

In some schools additional people may number three or four in one classroom. In the reception class at West End Primary, five out of 22 children have statements under the 1981 Act. The three deaf children are not present all the time but when they are, they are supported by one or two

adults. In addition a boy with behavioural problems receives full-time support from a non-teaching assistant as does a girl with physical disabilities.

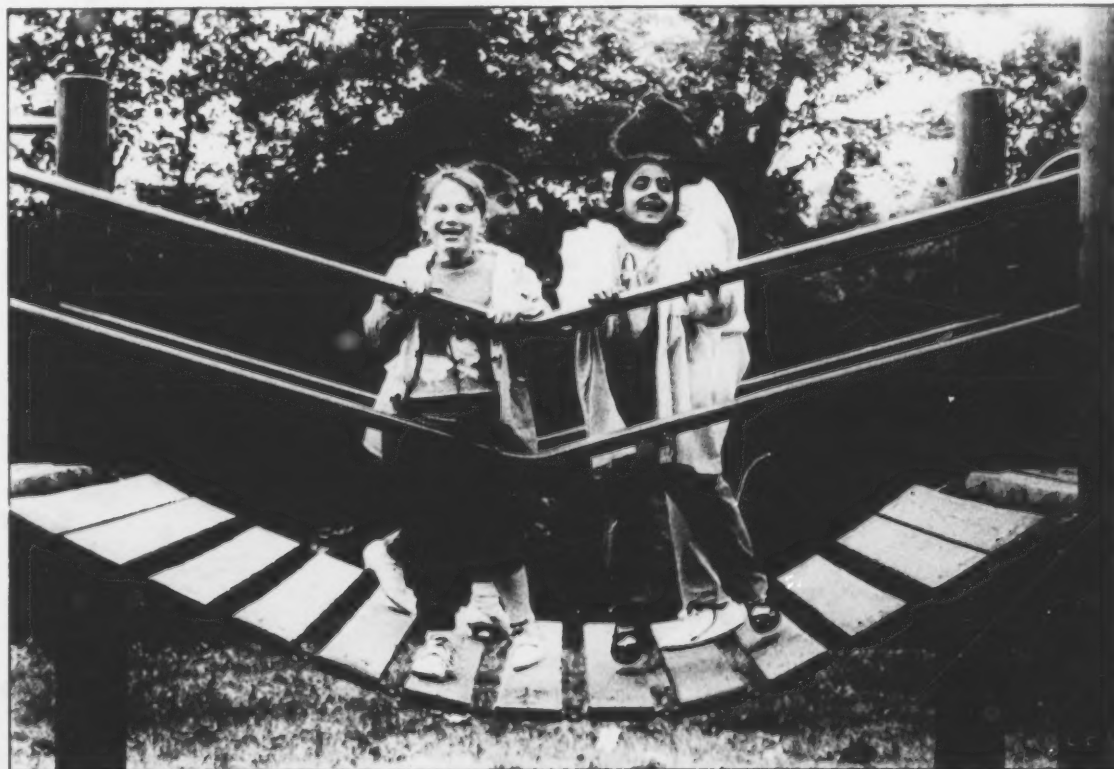
Liaise and plan

According to the reception class teacher, Maggie Burden, team teaching puts an additional strain on teachers. "The difficulty is to make time to liaise and plan". Ideally she would like to see extra mainstream staff but recognises money is not available. While she feels that integration adds to the administrative load, she welcomes the help support staff and non-teaching assistants give to mainstream children as well as the additional assistance from support teachers with the requirements of the 1988 Education Act.

Steve Conlon, who acts as an interpreter for Sarah, a 14-year-old pupil, emphasises that including staff from the Hearing Impaired Service necessarily effects teaching methods even where there are few deaf pupils at the school. An interpreter often has to discuss with a teacher ways in which part of the lesson or the teaching styles can be changed.

In particular, a teacher who talks for a very long time without visual back-up can cause problems because interpreters find it extremely difficult to sign for extended periods. Educational interpreters also need to have advance warning of what is going to be said in a lesson. They must be sure they can deal with difficult vocabulary and that they understand the content of lessons well enough to explain to deaf pupils.

Doreen Naylor a deaf instructor based at West End Primary School, says teachers vary considerably in their sensitivity to the needs of deaf pupils. She regrets that teacher turnover is often too fast to keep up effective in-service training.





● *At work with an interpreter.*

Liz Bisson, headmistress of Parklands, thinks that the integration of deaf pupils may improve teaching styles: "Teachers have to examine their methods. It forces them to prepare in advance — someone interpreting everything you say means you have to say it right and think it through".

According to Miranda Pickersgill integration inevitably affects the dynamics of a school. "The best we can do is to enable teachers to establish their 'street credibility'. They have to earn the right to intercede on behalf of deaf pupils".

Staff have been carefully recruited by the Hearing Impaired Service. Because new jobs were being created the service organised a series of short training courses for people interested in becoming deaf instructors and interpreters and it was from these courses that staff were eventually drawn. "Holding the training courses meant that when we eventually advertised the posts people knew what we were talking about", says Miranda Pickersgill.

Many staff, especially deaf instructors, do not come from teacher backgrounds. Doreen Naylor was previously a research analyst. Her computing skills proved an additional bonus for the school. Steve Conlon worked with people who have physical disabilities and learning difficulties. He learned sign language from a friend who is deaf and later went on a course to improve his skills.

In-service training

Because teachers work out how to achieve their aims experientially, in-service training has become a crucial part of the job, providing opportunities for assessment, relaying ideas and





brainstorming. Staff are required to attend in-service courses twice a week for up to one-and-a-half hours after school and there are also voluntary weekend courses. In-service training for staff in the Hearing Impaired Service is expected to continue indefinitely.

Awareness of the needs of disabled and deaf pupils among hearing and able-bodied pupils is one of the most important achievements of integration. Liz Bisson of Parklands says the school has very much enjoyed its experience of integration. "It has given us a richness we didn't have before".

Maggie Burden believes there are "enormous benefits" for hearing pupils at West End Primary School. "Integration heightens their awareness of disability, of how similar people with disabilities

are, rather than how different, and also of what they can do to help".

Support staff say that although deaf children may choose to keep to themselves in the playground, they are encouraged to mix in the classroom. Some have developed relationships with hearing friends outside school. Sarah, the only deaf pupil in her year at Parklands, says she has many hearing friends and mixes freely.

However, one deaf instructor expressed concern that a good school for the deaf could serve deaf pupils even better than good integration. She said she never had enough time to do the basic work deaf children needed because of having to follow up work done in an integrated setting. And within the base she found it hard to work with such a wide age range.

Miranda Pickersgill agrees that some services would have been a lot easier to achieve in a school for the deaf but feels there are wider implications. She says deaf children have benefited from the wider curriculum and there have been great benefits for the hearing children. "We are influencing society — we want to make it a better place for deaf children. The hearing children don't have stereotyped views and they accept that hearing aids and sign language are part of life".

Facilitate solidarity

She says that the service has underestimated the importance of the deaf peer group for deaf pupils. "In some schools there are very small numbers — perhaps two — and the children tell us they feel isolated. Deaf pupils need to gain confidence from their peer group and to see older deaf pupils who can serve as models".

To facilitate solidarity the service has now set up links with the Leeds Deaf Centre and made arrangements for deaf students to meet together in groups here and in other settings weekly during school-time. Bringing together deaf students for short periods also provides a more appropriate opportunity for tackling subjects like



sex-education and deaf drama which are difficult in an integrated setting.

Miranda Pickersgill emphasises that deafness is not like other special needs. Deafness has a profound effect on how people experience the world. It is a social identity and deaf people have a culture with its own sophisticated language, sign language (BSL).

"We have to respect that deaf culture is different and we must give pupils access to that culture as well as to that of hearing people", she says.

In the short-term at least the financial future of the Hearing Impaired Service is secure. Mike Robertshaw, director of special services, says funds will be kept under central control and not delegated as part of local management of schools arrangements.

Miranda Pickersgill is concerned about the long-term effect of the Education Reform Act's local management provisions. She says a hearing impaired service like the one being developed in Leeds has to be organised centrally and be confident of its budget. It has to be flexible and respond to changes in needs. A school might find itself faced with very difficult budgeting decisions under LMS and it might not be possible to maintain staff levels for special needs, she argues.

Meanwhile Leeds remains firmly committed to an integrationist policy. Mike Robertshaw says the authority is in the process of reducing the number of special school places. Plans are being considered to amalgamate some special schools and develop others for different use.

"Over the last few years priority has been given to integrating hearing impaired children. It is now a question of refining that policy and the next priority is developing a special service in the mainstream for the physically disabled", he said. □



• Respect for deaf culture



• Central Leeds — a city firmly committed to an integrationist policy

Kingsway College post-16 provision

Where: Camden, London.

Beginnings: Integration has been evolving for 20 years as part of a strong equal opportunities policy.

Numbers: Many students with physical disabilities and learning difficulties are integrated into a student population of 1,500 full-time and 5,000 part-time and evening students. In addition there are approximately 80 students on special courses for those with learning difficulties.

Ages: 16 and over.

Aim: To provide a welcoming environment for students who have a disability or health problem and to seek better ways of adjusting to the needs of students with special needs.





Integration at Kingsway College in London has been evolving for 20 years as part of a strong commitment to equal opportunities in education. The college prospectus tells students: "We aim to make you welcome regardless of your age, class, colour, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability or other special need

"We welcome applications from students who have a disability, a learning problem (dyslexia for example), or a health problem"

Liz Maudslay, senior lecturer for disability, says the emphasis is on the support that students need rather than on their disability. The college constantly seeks ways of adjusting to meet the needs of students.

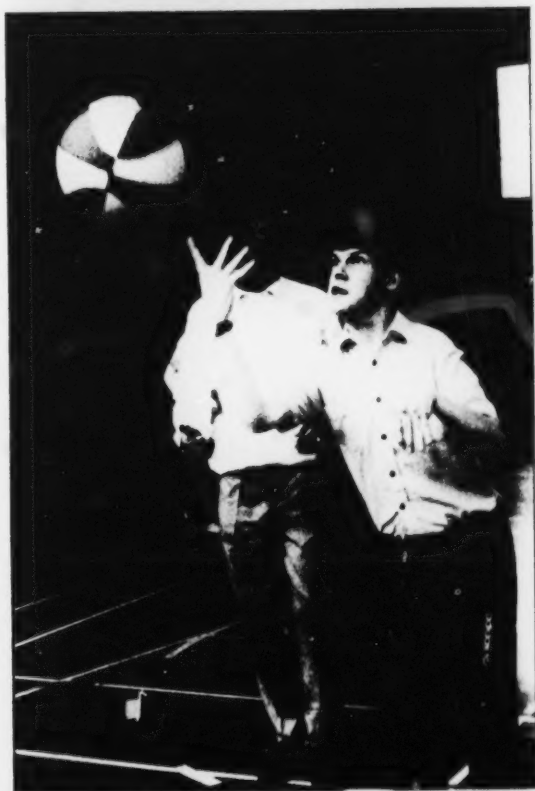
Kingsway has approximately 1,500 full time and 5,000 part-time and evening students from diverse backgrounds. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 19, though mature students are welcome and there are specially designed courses for them. The college is based on three sites, near King's

Cross, each specialising in different subject areas.

Part-time A-level/GCSE courses are available together with a variety of other part-time courses offering students opportunities to learn new skills, update existing skills, prepare for employment or setting up in business. The college runs day release and evening courses, and a school-link scheme enables school pupils to attend for part of their study programme.

Students with disabilities and learning difficulties are included in many of these mainstream situations. In January 1990 there were about ten students with physical disabilities and many more with learning difficulties and other problems.

"We are a welcoming college. Applicants know that the ethos of the college is encouraging if they have special needs" says Sue Sandle, vice principal.



People with learning difficulties also have opportunities to attend specialist courses at Kingsway. Seventeen students attend a two-year, full-time course for students with severe learning difficulties and several attend "on link" for one day a week for a year before the course. Ten students are members of an employment training course for adults with severe learning difficulties and 35 attend two courses for students with other varied learning problems, including emotional and social difficulties. An RSA (Royal Society of Arts) business studies course caters for up to eight deaf students.

Team work

These specialist courses are taught by subject specialists and learning difficulty specialists working as a team. They offer support in what Liz Maudslay calls a "transitional period"; many students leave the courses for mainstream employment, training or education. Students on specialist courses use all the college facilities and have access to college-wide courses including, for example, yoga and dance.

The only disabled people excluded from Kingsway are those with profound or multiple disabilities/difficulties because the college cannot provide the necessary level of supervision for them at present.

The inclusion of special educational provision in the college's equal opportunities policy is illustrated by the management structure. Vice principal, Sue Sandle has responsibility for equal opportunities. Reporting to her are a multi-ethnic education co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for disability who chairs the standing committee for special needs, a sub-committee of the academic board, and also sits on the course monitoring committee representing students with special needs.





• *Support must be adapted to individual needs.*

The co-ordinator for disability — Liz Maudslay — is also a member of the co-ordinating group which considers how equal opportunities can be integrated into the curriculum.

One lecturer works 15 hours a week with students with physical disabilities and there are four general duties assistants for the severe learning disabilities courses as well as a part-time (six hours a week) learning support teacher for students who have a block to learning — for example, the mature student who, because of lack of confidence, cannot write essays.

Considerable counselling support is available. A full-time student counsellor deals with emotional problems while a full time student services officer handles practical problems such as housing benefits. Two full-time and one part-time tutor are also available to help.

Many of the general duties assistants are recent Kingsway students. This means the assistants are of a similar age to the students and they know the college from a student's rather than an outsider's perspective.

Liz Maudslay is enthusiastic about the scheme, although she agrees teachers sometimes find it difficult to work with general duties assistants in the classroom. "At first they tend to denigrate them or treat them as teachers which they are not". She regrets that the high level of responsibility taken on by assistants is not reflected in their pay. "Integration couldn't take place without them", she says.

Individual needs

Students are encouraged to tell Kingsway about any disability before they start a course so that the college can make necessary adjustments. If possible, meetings are set up in advance. Support must be adapted to individual needs but, at the same time, the college is anxious not to

force its attentions on students. "Some students with a physical disability never come to me — they don't want to", says Liz Maudslay.

One Kingsway student who chose not to seek extra help is attending an A-level psychology course for six hours a week. She is a mature student who lost her sight eighteen months ago and her ambition is to gain a BSc in psychology; she has already applied to London University.

She says her present need is to be treated like everyone else and she thinks it is unrealistic to expect the college to make big adjustments. However, because her disability means it takes much longer to get through course work — up to 70 hours to write a report — she may need more help from the college in the future. Possibly her biggest struggle though is coming to terms with society's changed attitude towards her, now that she is blind.

John McGann, a young man with cerebral palsy, who is studying GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in English and Maths and working towards a BTEC (Business and Technician Education Council) in computer science, has not been reticent in articulating his needs. "I feel that if I ask, I'll get". He has spent a lifetime battling prejudice first in Dublin where he spent his childhood and then in London where he moved in 1987. Eventually he hopes to do social work with people who have the same disability. Primary support for John McGann is in the form of an electric typewriter and a general assistant to take his notes.

Kingsway is concerned about making buildings more accessible but does not give access greater priority than other requirements for integration, such as support teachers and encouraging positive images of disability.

According to Sue Sandle, lack of access can be used as an excuse for doing nothing and the



college tries to guard against this by emphasising the college's responsibility for the problem. "People should be admitted because of their suitability for a course not because they can get upstairs. Access is not their problem — it is ours", she says.

Even though one of the three Kingsway College sites is a modern building, none are fully accessible and the walking distance between them is from five to 15 minutes. The buildings are on three or more floors and there are no lifts. Stair-climbing wheelchairs are not a complete solution. Special training is required and some students do not have the necessary motor and co-ordination skills or do not feel secure using them.

Flexible arrangements

The college's approach is to try to be very flexible. One woman wheelchair user seeking a shorthand course had been turned down by three other colleges because of access problems. Kingsway's answer was to re-allocate its shorthand course — normally held on the second floor — on the ground floor so the woman could take part. The college also has on occasions re-timetabled courses because getting between sites became a problem for a disabled student.

If re-arrangements are not possible students have to be carried upstairs in wheelchairs or driven or pushed between sites. Despite the college's willingness to be flexible, facilities on some sites, including canteens and libraries, may still remain barred to some students because of access problems.

Travel to and from home to college can also present difficulties. Special buses are provided for students with severe learning difficulties but otherwise students have to rely on taxis — the college has not managed to raise the money to replace its old mini-bus. Students are encouraged to apply for taxi cards which entitle them to reduce fares. Using taxis between college sites and to other facilities, such as the local sports centre, is often unsatisfactory because students with disabilities may be left waiting for transport after others have left. "It makes them feel separate", says Liz Maudslay.

As part of a general equal opportunities policy a lot of effort goes into encouraging positive images of disability among pupils and staff. "Getting positive images of disability into the curriculum of able-bodied students is as important as supporting the disabled students", says Sue Sandle.

Ways are constantly sought to encourage students to think about disability in a positive and practical way. BTEC science students, for example, have worked on a project to adapt a laboratory for scientists who are disabled.

Subtle prejudice

The reaction of students to integration appears to be positive. According to Liz Maudslay, there are probably fewer anti-disability instances than cases of racism or sexism, although she points out that prejudice against disabled people may be expressed in subtle ways, for instance, through being patronising.

The mature blind student finds the attitude of other students "brilliant — very different from the people in the street, who just think you are thick. One student has totally adopted me and waits for me in a very natural, matter-of-fact way". John

McGann finds students unpatronising and for the first time has made friends without difficulty.

The blind student prefers other students to "see me as an individual first, and someone who has got something that makes life difficult, second". Young students seem to have this attitude more than adults but whether it can be attributed to the college is hard to say as many of the students have only recently started courses.

Supporting staff is a primary task for effective integration in Sue Sandle's opinion. Many teachers suffer from lack of confidence on top of the other constraints of lack of money, resources and time. "Some staff will have stereotyped ideas and the lack of confidence springs from this. When we talk about actual people, the stereotypes break down. When staff members are faced with students with disabilities they have to get down to the nitty gritty and they do."

Demanding work

Another cause for apprehension is the misconception that working with people with disabilities or difficulties is low status work. "Teachers sometimes feel that anyone can do it, they fear lowering of standards" says Liz Maudslay. "It is only later they realise that working with people with learning difficulties is very intellectually demanding work. It forces them to really challenge their delivery of the curriculum".

Sue Sandle says that integration needs a lot of in-service training by an experienced disability trainer. It also has to be on-going so that it is absolutely relevant to present experiences. The ideal situation would be for all the college's 200 full-time staff to have three days disability awareness training but because of the cost it has been possible for only about a dozen members of staff to benefit so far. The college has also

organised half-day seminars on specific disability issues. In the financial year 1989/90 it spent £3,000 on in-service special needs training.

It is the policy of Kingsway that all staff have responsibility for students with disabilities in their class. "We're trying to get away from the situation where teachers come up to me and talk about 'one of your students' or think they are not involved because they don't have people with disabilities in their classes", says Liz Maudslay.

The commitment of staff to integration is clear from the number of times special needs is referred to in the objectives of the college's teaching units. The computer studies course and performing arts units recently resolved to "increase the number of special needs students on courses" and asked for assistance from Liz Maudslay. The visual arts unit plans to use positive role models of disability. Training for school keepers covers a whole range of issues including disability.

For the future Kingsway is hoping that enough money will be available under the new Education Reform Act funding arrangements to enable provision to be expanded and facilities improved. Liz Maudslay warns that integration is expensive and cannot be seen as a route to cuts.

As for the National Curriculum, she feels it could have a positive knock-on effect for the college. "If it works as an entitlement curriculum it could make students more demanding, which would be good. However, there is also a danger that after years of tests students will come to us with a sense of failure, especially those with learning difficulties."

Liz Maudslay emphasises that the college knows it "hasn't got it right", and possibly never will. "Integration is a process, not a state. We have to continually look at the needs of the students and at ways of making people more aware". □ □



Information

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Embargoed until 00.01 hours, Friday November 16, 1990

INTEGRATION WORKS - AND THERE COULD BE MUCH MORE.

If deaf children can be educated successfully in ordinary schools in Leeds, then we have to ask why it cannot happen in other towns and cities says the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE) in publishing a new report today ("Integration Working" price £2.50).

The report describes the full integration of deaf children in mainstream schools by the Leeds local education authority. It also includes descriptions of other types of integration in different parts of the country.

According to CSIE, the effective practice featured in the report shows what can be achieved when there is a strong commitment to integration by LEA professionals and administrators. The Centre said many thousands more disabled children could benefit from learning alongside their peers in ordinary schools rather than being taught separately in special schools. And non-disabled children benefit too.

The new report is in three sections:

- * Springfield Junior School in Derbyshire has been integrating children with a wide range of learning difficulties for nearly ten years. Combining special and ordinary resources means that class sizes have been reduced with benefits to all.
- * In Leeds the integration of deaf children is one of the most radical approaches to this area of education in the country.
- * At Kingsway FE College in Camden, London, the integration of disabled students has evolved over 20 years along with the College's strong equal opportunities policy.

CSIE, which is an independent educational charity and pressure group promoting integration of all disabled children and young people in ordinary schools, commented this week:

"Many people believe that disabled children and adults belong in their local communities but seem afraid to put principles into practice. This new report shows that integration can work well when committed professionals and administrators actively pursue the integration principle through careful planning and effective support strategies".

The United Kingdom was a long way behind other countries such as Canada, USA, Scandinavia and Italy, said CSIE. Some education authorities in parts of Canada do not run any special schools and

.../ Cont.

special classes in ordinary schools are virtually extinct; all children with disabilities or learning difficulties are included in the mainstream.

Quotes from the CSIE report "Integration Working":

* In Leeds, Miranda Pickersgill, who runs the Hearing Impaired Service, says that deaf children have benefited from the wider curriculum and there have been great benefits for the hearing children. "We are influencing society - we want to make it a better place for deaf children. The hearing children don't have stereotyped views and they accept that hearing aids and sign language are part of life".

* In Derbyshire the headteacher of Springfield Junior School, Swadlincote, Ian Mitchell says parents of the mainstream children soon see they are not being held back and that the school is better resourced, especially in terms of staff. "Moreover, many appreciate that the kids gain in insight; that they have a more caring attitude, and are more understanding".

* In Camden, London at Kingsway College Liz Maudslay, senior lecturer says teachers sometimes feel that anyone can teach people with disabilities or learning difficulties. "It is only later they realise that working with people with learning difficulties is very intellectually demanding work. It forces them to really challenge their delivery of the curriculum".

"Integration Working" price £2.50 ISBN 1 872001 02 5 is published by:

The Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE),
415 Edgware Road, London NW2 6NB.

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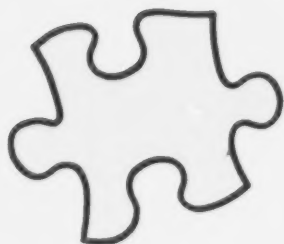
Note: CSIE is a national organisation collecting and disseminating information about integration in this country and abroad. It is fully committed to working towards an end to all segregated special education, and says that integration must be seen as a human rights issue belonging within equal opportunities policies. CSIE is an independent body and offers a free legal advice service as well publishing a wide range of booklets, reports and leaflets. It carries out surveys of local authority practice.



Springfield Junior School in Derbyshire has been integrating children with a wide range of learning difficulties for nearly ten years. Combining special and ordinary resources means that class sizes have been dramatically reduced .



Leeds LEA began integrating children with disabilities or learning difficulties before the 1981 Education Act came into force. The integration of deaf pupils in the city's mainstream schools is one of the most radical approaches in the country.



Kingsway FE College in Camden, London has been evolving the integration of students with disabilities or learning difficulties over a 20 year period as part of its strong equal opportunities policy.

This report continues the descriptions of integration in practice published by CSIE.
